The Priceless For the Worthless

Hosea 2:5, 8

5 For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

... 

8 For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

Trinkets For Treasures

• Last Night, my family and I
  o went up to Cherokee Village to watch the fireworks show.

• We got there a little after 7:00 in the evening
  o and were entertained by a boat parade
  o and a helicopter air show
    ▪ while we waited for the main event
      • that would start at 9:00.

• There was a young couple
  o who were sitting on a blanket near us
  o that had their three year old daughter, Noel, with them
    ▪ and, as darkness began to settle in
    ▪ just before the fireworks show was going to begin,
      • a vendor came along
      • selling glow in the dark bracelets for $1.
  o Noel’s mom and dad bought her
    ▪ a handful of those bracelets,
      • which just fascinated that little girl.
    ▪ They were bright vivid colors,
      • that seemed to have a life of their own
        o and she was completely captivated by them.
  o As a matter of fact, she was so captivated by them
    ▪ that, when the main attraction began,
      • and the impressive fireworks began
        o to explode in the night sky,
      • Noel was facing the other way,
        o content to play
        o with her new luminescent wands of color.
  o It frustrated her mom and dad,
    ▪ who kept telling her,
      • “Noel, this is the reason why we came.
        o These fireworks are the main attraction.”
  o But Noel didn’t care,
    ▪ she was captivated
• with her little dollar store toys
• while thousands of dollars worth
  o of very impressive fireworks
  o were exploding behind her.

• I was reminded of those Christmas morning's
  o when my kids would open some expensive gift
    ▪ only to be more delighted
    ▪ playing with
      o the wrapping paper and the box
      o than they were with the gift.
  o That's just the way kids are sometimes.
    ▪ They are content with
      • whatever captures their imagination
        o in a moment.
  o They will literally ignore
    ▪ a very costly display of fireworks
    ▪ in order to entertain themselves
      o with trifles from the dollar store.
  o Their focus is only on the moment
    ▪ and they find value,
      • not in the real worth of a thing
        o but in the momentary satisfaction
          ▪ that can be found in the thing.
  o They don't have any of the social filters
    ▪ that would cause them to worry
      • that Mom and Dad might be offended
        o that they are more captivated
          ▪ with the glow in the dark wand
          ▪ than they are with the fireworks.
  o They are focused on one question alone,
    ▪ what makes them happy for the moment?
• In many ways, children provide us with a raw glimpse
  o into the heart of the human condition.
    ▪ The human heart can be so shallow
      ▪ and so self centered sometimes
    ▪ that it abandons the things that have real value
      ▪ to chase after things
        o that have captivated the imagination
        o but cannot provide any lasting satisfaction.

**Hosea and Gomer**
• That is the underlying issue that the book of Hosea deals with.
  o Hosea was a prophet of God
    ▪ and God asked him to do a very strange thing.
God told him to take a woman
  - who was a known harlot
    - and make her his wife.
The story that unfolds is a living parable
  - of how humanity spurns
    - the priceless love of God
      - to pursue the worthless trinkets
        - of this life.

Hosea makes Gomer his wife
  - and he lavishes her with his love,
    - he pours out his affections upon her.
  - He gives her good gifts,
    - he gives her a good life,
      - he gives her a home
    - and provides for her in every way.
  - Hosea’s love for Gomer, in the story,
    - is like God’s love for us.
  - He loved us even when we didn’t deserve it.
    - He loved us with a love that doesn’t make any sense.
  - When were unfaithful,
    - when we were no different than Gomer,
      - the harlot,
        - he still loved us.
  - He came looking for us,
    - in the life we had chosen for ourselves,
      - and in his great love,
        - he rescued us from that.
  - He showered us with his blessings,
    - he covered us with his goodness
      - and he provided for our every need.

But the story doesn’t end there.
  - Eventually Gomer became restless
    - with her new life.
  - Eventually the cheap thrill
    - of meeting strangers in the dark
      - began to captivate her mind
    - and after a while,
      - Gomer began to fall back
        - into her old habits.
  - It began even while she was living in Hosea’s house,
    - while she and Hosea were raising the son
      - that they had together.

She became restless
  - and she started slipping out,
late at night,
  • when everyone else was asleep.
  • Perhaps she convinced herself
    • that she needed a little extra money,
    • perhaps she had
      • some good justification for it at first.
  • Perhaps she was going to save up a little
    • and surprise Hosea with a nice gift.
  • I don’t know what it was
    • but I do know that the human mind
      • has the unique ability
        • to put a friendly face
          • on a foul matter.
  • We have the ability to convince ourselves
    • that what we are doing is good
      • and wholesome
      • and right,
    • even when we know,
      • deep in our hearts,
        • that we are abandoning
        • the only true love we’ve ever known
          • to chase after a fleeting,
          • momentary pleasure
          • that will never satisfy our soul.

• There was a lengthy passage of time
  • where Gomer tried to live in both worlds.
• She tried to be a wife to Hosea
  • while plying her trade in the darkness of night.
    • That went on for years.
• She lived two lives.
  • At home she tried to be the loving wife,
    • but when the night came,
      • she abandoned her husband
        • and pursued the attention of other men.
  • It continued like that long enough
    • for her to introduce two more children
      • into the marriage,
    • children that were fathered
      • by other men.

• Before long,
  • Gomer was completely caught up
    • in that lifestyle again.
• She abandoned Hosea,
  o and ran off with her lovers
    ▪ because they promised to lavish
    ▪ material things on her.
• That is where our text comes from,
  o at some point she must have tried
    ▪ to explain to Hosea
    ▪ why she chose that lifestyle over him
      o and the home he provided for her.
• Her explanation was as simple as it was shallow.
  o She said, “I will go after my lovers,
    ▪ that give me my bread and my water,
      ▪ my wool and my flax,
      ▪ mine oil and my drink.”
  o They give me things I want.
    ▪ It was all about her,
      ▪ she was captivated by here simple desires,
        o by the momentary pleasure
        o by the things that she thought she wanted.
• But Hosea says, just a few verses later,
  o “For she did not know
    ▪ that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil,
      ▪ and multiplied her silver and gold.”
  o What I gave her was far better
    ▪ than what she was chasing after.
  o Her lovers gave her bread and water,
    ▪ but I gave her corn and wine.
      ▪ They gave her wool and flax
        o but I gave her silver and gold.
• Gomer was no different than little Noel was last night.
  o She was so captivated
    ▪ by the cheap dollar store trinkets
      ▪ in her hands
    ▪ that she failed to recognize
      ▪ the truly valuable things
        o that she was ignoring in her life.

The Story Of The Fall
• Today, as we look at the story of Hosea and Gomer,
  o it seems so obvious to us
    ▪ how foolish that Gomer really was.
• She should have counted herself lucky
  o that she ever captured the heart
    ▪ of a man like Hosea,
that he would abandon all sense of decorum
  and make a harlot his wife.

She should have embraced
  the new life that he gave her.

She should have recognized
  the wonderful gift that he had given her,
    the priceless treasure
      that his love and commitment
        really was.

But she was blind to it all.

She became so captivated
  by momentary pleasures
    that she traded the priceless
      for the worthless.

She traded that which was so precious
  for that which was so common.

And when she did,
  she provided a very real,
    living, example
      of how the nation of Israel
        had spurned God’s love.

That was the point.

That was the reason why
  God told Hosea to marry a harlot,

so that the story
  that would undoubtedly unfold
    could become a living example
      of the plight of God’s own people.

God chose the nation of Israel.

He exalted her above all others.
  He showered her with his blessings,
    he lavished her with his love,

but over and over again,
  she abandoned the good life
    that he had given her
      to chase after other things.

When we see Gomer abandon
  that which was truly precious,
    gold and silver,
  to chase after that which was so common,
    wool and flax,
  we see the futility of a whole nation
    who spurned
      the priceless blessings of God.


- to pursue
  - the worthless treasures of this world.

- It is a living testimony
  o of the restlessness of the human heart
  - and it finds its roots
    - in the fall of humanity
      o way back in the Garden of Eden.

- In the very beginning,
  o God created Adam and Eve
  - and he put them
    - in a garden paradise
  - where their every need was met,
    - where everything
      o that they could ever want
        - was provided for them,
    - and best of all
      o he revealed himself to them.

- God made himself known in the garden.
  o He came, in the cool of the day,
    - and he walked with them
      - through the garden.
  o Adam and Eve enjoyed
    - the fellowship of God,
      - they had exclusive access
        o to the creator of all that is.
  o Daily, they walked
    - through the beauty of creation,
      - in the fellowship of the creator.

- I have to tell you, this afternoon,
  o that what made the Garden of Eden a paradise
    - was not the plants or the animals;
      - it was not the life of pleasure without toil or pain,
        o it was the one that met them there.
  o The real treasure of the garden
    - was a relationship with God.

- That is what God made them for,
  o that is why God fashioned the garden
    - in the first place.
  o The greatest thing that Adam and Eve possessed
    - was not a tropical paradise
      - or a life of comfort and ease.
  o The greatest thing that Adam and Eve possessed
    - was a relationship with God.
• The truth about the Garden of Eden
  o is that what made it so wonderful
    ▪ was the presence of God.
  o It was never about the plants and animals,
    ▪ the fruits of the trees
    ▪ or the flowers that bloomed there.
  o It was never about a carefree existence,
    ▪ A life of unending pleasure.
• It was about that special time of day,
  o the cool of the day,
    ▪ when God would come
    ▪ and walk with His creation.
  o The rest was just the icing on the cake,
    ▪ the rest was the overflow
    ▪ of the goodness of God.
  o But the real prize was the fellowship of God.

• Somehow, Adam and Eve failed to recognize
  o how valuable the treasure really was.
    ▪ Somehow, the material things around them,
    ▪ the fruit of a forbidden tree,
    ▪ became more attractive
    ▪ than the fellowship of their creator.
  o You see, when Gomer left Hosea,
    ▪ she was acting no different than Adam and Eve.
  o When she traded gold and silver
    ▪ for wool and flax,
  o she was acting just like Adam and Eve
    ▪ who traded the knowledge of God
    ▪ for the knowledge of good and evil.

• Think about it!
  o What greater knowledge is there
    ▪ than the knowledge of God?
  o When you know God,
    ▪ what more could you ever want to know?
  o Adam and Eve had all of the knowledge
    ▪ that they could ever want.
  o The knowledge of God
    ▪ is the benchmark
    ▪ for what is good
    ▪ and what is not.
• Yet they traded the infinite blessing of knowing God
  o for the limited benefit
    ▪ of the knowledge of good and evil.
• The knowledge of God is the most precious,
  o most priceless thing that exists
    • in all of the world.
  o And the knowledge of good and evil,
    • the understanding of right and wrong,
      • is the most common,
      • most basic, knowledge that there is.
  o But Adam and Eve traded
    • the priceless for the worthless,
      • they exchanged that which was precious
        o for that which was common.

**The Priceless For The Worthless**

• It is a story that is woven
  o throughout the whole of human existence.
• When it comes to the knowledge of God,
  o we have a propensity to forsake the priceless
    • to obtain the worthless.
• This is the charge that Paul lays
  o at the feet of humanity in general,
    • in the first chapter of Romans.

**Romans 1:21-25 (MEV)**

21 Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him or give thanks to Him as God, but became futile in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools.
23 They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things.
24 Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves.
25 They turned the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

• Here’s the point:
  o The sinful heart has tendency
    • to worship the creature
      • rather than the creator,
    • to forsake the knowledge of God
      • for the pursuit of lesser things.
  o Like Gomer, we are blind
    • to what we are giving up
      • because we are completely captivated
        o by what we are pursuing.
  o Like Eve, we have bought the lie,
- Hook, line and sinker,
  - that the most common things in this world
    - are more valuable
    - than the most precious thing in all of eternity.
- Our sense of value has been turned on its head.
  - We would rather play
    - with the dollar store trinkets of this life
    - than to enjoy the priceless treasure
      - of the presence of God in our lives.
- It is the most lopsided exchange that you could ever imagine.
  - That which is righteous,
    - good
      - and holy
      - is traded for that which is base,
      - common,
      - and self-gratifying.
  - The worship of the creator
    - is traded for the worship of the creation.
- But that isn't what we were made for.
  - We were made to worship God.
    - And what we fail to realize
      - is that all of the trinkets of this world
        - will never satisfy
        - the deep longing of our souls.
- The momentary pleasures of this life
  - are fleeting things
    - that only leave us empty and broken.
  - They cannot satisfy
    - the desire of our hearts
      - because they are not
        - what we are really hungry for.
- Oh they can distract us for a moment,
  - they can captivate us for a time,
    - but they cannot and will not
      - ever be able to,
        - satisfy the real desire of our hearts.
- We were made for fellowship with God.
  - We were made to walk with him,
    - to know him
      - and to be known by him.
  - The only true source
    - of happiness and satisfaction
      - in this life
that you will ever find
  • will come from knowing God,
    ▪ from worshipping Him,
    ▪ from having a relationship with Him.

The Priceless Became The Worthless

• This afternoon, I appeal to the story
  • of Hosea and Gomer
    ▪ in hope that you will see in it
      • the reflection of your own human heart.
  • I hope and pray
    • that, for a moment this afternoon,
      ▪ as you see the futility of Gomer’s pursuit
        • that you will recognize
        ▪ the propensity that you have,
          • that we all have,
        ▪ to trade that which is priceless
          • for that which is worthless.
  • I want to join my voice
    • with that Hosea’s
      ▪ as it echoes across the ages
        • and appeals to all of humanity,
      ▪ stop and consider
        • the value of the relationship
          • that you have neglected in your life.
  • Before you pursue
    • that which you cannot obtain,
      ▪ stop and consider
        • the priceless treasure
          • that you already have.

• Adam and Eve traded their relationship with God
  • for an empty promise.
    ▪ Gomer fled the home
      • of the only man who ever truly loved her,
    ▪ trading the treasure of his love
      • for the vain pursuit
        • of hollow trinkets.
• Like them,
  • we each have the terrible propensity
    • to trade the priceless for the worthless,
      • to forsake the love and mercy of God
        • in pursuit of some temporary worldly pleasure
      • that will bring us nothing
• but hurt and pain
  • and will only leave us
    o broken and empty.

• However, that’s not the end of the story.
  o The failure of humanity,
    ▪ the spurning of God’s love,
      • is only the beginning of the story.
    ▪ God loved us too much
      • to let it end there.

• When we forsook the priceless
  o to obtain the worthless,
    ▪ God responded by making
      • that which was priceless
        o become that which was worthless.
  o He made himself
    ▪ a little lower than the angels.

• God was not content,
  o to let us face the terrible wages of sin alone.
    ▪ Instead, He robed himself in flesh.
  o God became a man
    ▪ so that he could personally pay the price
      • for our transgressions.

• Out of his great love for us,
  o he redeemed us with his own blood.

• In the garden,
  o humanity sought that which was worthless
    ▪ at the expense of that which was priceless
  o but at the cross
    ▪ God offered that which was priceless
      • in order to redeem that which was worthless.

• He made a way,
  o by the shedding of his own blood,
    ▪ for you and I to be saved
      • from the horrible consequence
        o of the terrible decisions we have made.
  o He made a way for us
    ▪ to be restored to a right relationship with him,
      • for humanity to once again
        o enjoy the matchless wonder
          ▪ of a relationship with God.
  o He showed us mercy
    ▪ when we did not deserve it,
      • he showered us with love
O when we were yet unlovable,
O he came to us,
  ▪ in our backslidden, fallen condition,
    • and he offered us another chance,
  ▪ another opportunity,
    • a new invitation
      O to know him
        ▪ like we have never
        ▪ known him before.

• In keeping with the story of the ages,
  O that is exactly what God instructed Hosea to do.
• God sent him in pursuit
  O of the bride that abandoned him.
• And one lonely afternoon,
  O on the bad side of town,
    ▪ in the midst of the filth and squalor
      • of a slave trader’s auction,
        O Hosea finally found Gomer.
  O How pitiful she must have appeared,
    ▪ abandoned by her lovers,
      • rejected and abused,
    ▪ an empty shadow
      • of the woman she once was.
• But through the love of God,
  O Hosea saw not the woman who spurned him,
    ▪ the wife who had abandoned him,
  O instead he saw his bride,
    ▪ the only woman he ever truly loved in this life.
• And in an exchange that foreshadowed the cross,
  O Hosea bought that which was rightfully his.
    ▪ He paid the ransom price for his own wife.
      • He bought her out of slavery.
  O He paid a debt that he did not owe
    ▪ in order to obtain that which was already his.

• If the story ended there,
  O it would be an incredible tale of enduring love,
    ▪ love that bears all,
      • love that will not stop,
      • love that keeps loving
        O no matter what it gets in return.
• That’s the kind of love
  O that God has for us
• and that's the kind of love
  • that Hosea demonstrated to Gomer.

• But that isn’t the end of the story.
  o The true wonder of the story
    ▪ is what happens next.
• Hosea had every right to make Gomer his slave.
  o He had every right to force her
    ▪ into a life of servitude to him,
      • to bring her home
        ▪ and make her be a mother to her children
        ▪ and a servant in his house.
  o But, instead, he made her his bride again.
    ▪ He took her home with him, that day,
      ▪ and gave her complete liberty.
    ▪ Instead of a slave,
      ▪ she would be to him a wife
        • and instead of a master,
          ▪ he would be to her a husband.

The Rest Of The Story
• The Bible doesn’t tell us what happened next.
  o We never really learn
    ▪ if Hosea’s selfless sacrifice
      • was enough to earn
        ▪ Gomer’s faithfulness to him.
• It’s almost as if God leaves the story open
  o so that each of us will realize
    ▪ that we have to make that choice for ourselves.
• Gomer’s story is our story
  o and the rest of the story is in our hands.
• God has loved us enough to deliver us.
  o He has paid the price that he did not owe,
    ▪ he has redeemed us
      • out of the slavery of sin
        ▪ with his own blood
  o but, when he could have
    ▪ made us his servants,
  o when he could have
    ▪ ruled over us as a master,
      • instead he has given us
        ▪ our own free will.
• He has invited us to know him,
  o not just to serve him,
    ▪ but to have a relationship with him.
• Like Hosea, he has given us back our life
  o and has asked us, again,
    • to give our life to him.

CLOSE
• This afternoon, you have a choice to make.
  o There is question you must answer
    • in your own heart.
• Will you choose the worthless things of this world,
  o the pursuits of this life
    • that will ultimately leave you
      • empty and broken again?
  o Or will you choose the fellowship of God?
    • Will you choose to know Him,
      • to walk with him,
      • to have a relationship with him?
• When you look at Gomer
  o it is so easy to see
    • what the right choice is,
  o it is so obvious
    • that the best thing in her life
      • is the love that Hosea has shown to her.
• But when you look at your own life,
  o when you consider your own situation,
    • things become a little less obvious
      • and a whole lot more complicated.
• This afternoon,
  o you need to cut through all of the confusion
    • and find the clear and simple answer
      • that has been staring you in the face all along.
• The only thing that will ever
  o bring you the happiness and fulfillment
    • that you are so hungry for
      • is the knowledge that you are right with God.
• The only thing that will ever satisfy your soul
  o is a relationship with God.
    • The more you neglect that,
      • the more dissatisfied your soul will become
        o and the more dissatisfying
          • the pursuits of this life will be.
• You must make a choice.
  o Let me encourage you today,
    • to abandon your fruitless pursuit
      • of worldly pleasures
and lose yourself completely
  ▪ in a relationship with the one
    • who loves you with a complete and perfect love.
• It is the greatest treasure of all the ages,
  o the treasure of a relationship with God!